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than one hundred and five pair of blankets added to the stock of this town and its vicinity, and purchased chiefly by persons who would but for this advantageous method held out to them, probably never have obtained them.

The price of the blankets is considered as a loan, and the person proposing for them offers his securities and the business is transacted in the same manner as if for the loan.

4. Filing the holes, and mending the ways, &c.

Nothing has as yet been done in this matter, but it has been considered that the health as well as the comfort of the people will be much improved by attention to it, and that premiums offered within given limits, for the most cleanly and best constructed houses under certain conditions and restrictions may prove highly conducive to health and cleanliness.

With regard to the general system of the institution: it is placed under the direction of an open committee, constituted of all subscribers of half a guinea a year and upwards, and subscribers of five guineas a year for life.

Two general meetings are held half yearly, who hold controul over the proceedings of the weekly committee.

The duty of the committee is to receive the weekly collections of money, to order payment to the district visitors, on examining their reports, to lend out money (generally in sums from one to ten pounds) to sell blankets, &c. to inspect the accounts and to give directions relative to the daily school.

The officers consist of a treasurer without, and a secretary with a salary of £20 a year. The secretary collects the instalments and transacts all the weighty business.

This institution was formed chiefly on the model of one in Cashel the plan of which was communicated by his Grace, the Archbishop of Cashel. Notwithstanding the insignificance of its funds (to which must be attributed the delay in bringing to practice several of the objects proposed) the Maryborough society has already

proved the value of the system; perhaps there exists no mode whatever (at least none acknowledged) by which small means can effect so great objects as that which this system offers.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

AN ACCOUNT OF ISLAND MAGEE,
TAKEN IN 1809.

ISLAND MAGEE is situated in the S. E. part of the county of Antrim. The west end is about four English miles from Carrickfergus; it is six miles in length, and near two in breadth. It is a peninsula, bounded on the south by Carrickfergus lough, on the north by that of Larne, on the east by the Irish channel, and on the west it is joined to the main land by a marshy isthmus of about a mile in breadth. The land is mostly arable, and well cultivated, producing abundance of wheat, corn, beans, &c. which generally meet a preference in market. There are, however, some fields,

‘With blossom’d furze, unprofitably gay.’

The soil is a deep clay, with limestone in many parts, some of which they export to Scotland, and the opposite coast of the county of Down. The face of the country is pleasantly diversified with little hills and valleys; yet, from the almost total want of plantings, it has but an indifferent appearance at a distance. The Marquis of Donegall is lord paramount of the island. The present landlord is Lord Dungannon, a very indulgent one. Indeed, I have often thought one might easily form a pretty correct opinion of the landlord, by taking a general view of his tenantry; and no where in Ireland do the houses of the farmers exhibit a greater plenty of homely fare than in Island Magee. The inhabitants live mostly by agriculture and fishing; they are robust, and of a ruddy complexion, speaking very broad, with somewhat of a Scottish accent: to be brief, in both persons and manners they somewhat resemble the inhabitants of North Britain, which may in some degree be accounted for by their remote situation obstructing their marriages with the interior. The inhabitants are supposed to

amount to about 1500. During the reign of superstition, this island was very famous for witches and hobgoblins. Even so late as 1711, eight women from this place were tried at Carrickfergus for witchcraft; and, '*fabulosa vetustate*,' we hear many feats of that sturdy fairey Browney; but at present superstition is no trait in the character of the people of Island Magee. This may be termed the island of love, it being the Gretna-green of this part of the country; the facetious Mr. M'Auley, ci-devant dissenting minister, performing the office of making two persons into one! At the west end, as you enter the island, is a small rivulet called Slaughter ford, from the massacre of 1642, which oral history says began here. Adjoining is a high hill called Moulder-slay, being a corruption of Murder-slay, referring to the same event. On the top of this hill are the ruins of a light-house.

Concerning the before-mentioned massacre of the Roman Catholic inhabitants, by the garrison of Carrickfergus, historians differ very much. Clarendon says, it happened in November 1641, and that the number massacred was 3000; and says also, that it was the first blood shed on either side. This is evidently a falsehood, as the rebellion broke out on the 23d of October prior to that period. Reilly, a Catholic, says it happened early in November 1641, and that the number massacred was between two and three thousand; but says, the rebellion began on the 23d of October. Leland, one of the most impartial of our historians, says, it happened early in January 1642, and that the number massacred were about thirty families. This last account seems most rational, as it is very improbable the island contained 3000 persons at that period. Tradition says, this massacre was committed in retaliation for others done by the Catholics. On the south part of the isthmus, at a small creek, stands Castle Chichester, an old square building, now a ruin; it formerly belonged to that family from which it takes its name. About two miles northward from this are the ruins of an ancient church. Here is a church, also two meeting-houses belonging to different sects of dissenters; the inhabitants are nearly to a man

of that persuasion. There is a Manor-court here, in which are transacted the civil affairs of the island. The houses seldom exceed one story, and are mostly entered by a small porch. On the S. E. part of the island is a high precipice called the Gabbon.

"The murmuring surge
"Can scarce be heard so high."

Tradition says, that in 1642, many Roman Catholics were driven over this terrible precipice. Beneath are several caverns in the rocks, into which the sea flows; some of them are wide enough to admit a small boat several perches; these, during the rebellion of 1798, served as an asylum to several persons proclaimed as traitors by government. When viewed from the sea the precipice is awfully grand. These lines of Cowper are descriptive of the view:

"The savage rock
"That hides the sea-mew in his hollow
 clefts
"Above the reach of man."

Here is found that marine plant called by the natives *dulse* or *dullies*. During summer it is gathered by poor people, and sold in fairs, &c. This precipice is much frequented by sea-birds, which build here in vast numbers: among these birds is the *gos-hawk*, called by the inhabitants the *Gabbon hawk*. Antiently, the chieftry paid for the island, was a pair of those hawks, and a pair of gloves; the hawks being of the species trained for the chase; a man had formerly ten pounds a year for lifting them on Midsummer-day. On those occasions, the person employed was let down the precipice, with a rope round his middle, having a small basket with a strait mouth, to put the young hawks into when caught. The concourse of people on those occasions generally amounted to several hundreds, many resorting thither from the adjacent country; the remainder of the day was spent in dancing, fishing, and other rural exercises. The chieftry being now paid in cash, the custom is discontinued, but people are still let over the precipice, for the purpose of getting eggs and young birds. The Irish *gos-hawks* were formerly much esteemed, both for their great strength and beauty, and by ancient writers ranked among the curiosities

of the country. This shore is bold and rocky, with several natural caves. Foxes are found here. Along this shore is good fishing. The fish caught are ling, and a fish they call blockins. During the months of July and August, herrings are commonly caught; at present they are more abundant than usual. Some kelp is also made along this coast. Here is the scite of a church. On a rising ground, near the northern extremity of the island, is a Druidical altar, it consists of six large stones set upright in the earth, viz. four on the north side, and two on the south: those stones are about three feet high above the surface of the earth, and the space between the sides about the same: on the top there is a large stone, being upwards of six feet long, and the west end of nearly equal breadth, but sloping towards the east to about three feet: this stone is near two feet thick, and pretty smooth on both sides; it rests on two stones on the north side, and one on the south; beneath is a large stone which seems to have served as a floor. I inquired at a neighbouring house, if these stones had any particular name (for I expected to have heard of their erection by Fin M'Cool, alias, Fion M'Cumhal, or some such hero of antiquity) but was informed that they had no particular name, nor any account concerning them. Eastward of this is a small isle, commonly called Muck, signifying swine, but in charts the Knee; it can be entered at low water, and serves to graze a few sheep. Near this is a small haven called Port Muck, accounted very safe for small vessels. Off this is caught that delicate fish the turbot.

S. M. S.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,
I WAS disappointed on reading the last Number of the Belfast Magazine, to find such an ill-natured attack on the Female-sex, in your pages, as I had supposed from the liberality and good sense of the Proprietors of the Magazine, the "Auction" would have been immediately rejected.—Happily for the Female-sex, they are now considered more than mere dolls, and such vulgar witticisms as, "she has forty nicks in her horn at least," and the plan of selling, "500

damsels, all in great want of husbands," in lots of half a dozen, are not admired by those who have even a moderate share of understanding. I admit some of the Female-sex, from their manner of speaking and writing, seem to consider the chief business of life is to be in love, and to be married; but because some think so, it is unfair for A. Z. to suppose all are of the same opinion. On reading Espricella's letters, I was amused with a conference Joanna Southcott reports she had with the devil, and was pleased to find that even he, had not a worse opinion of the Female-sex than A. Z. He complained he found it much more difficult to dispute with one woman than with a thousand men. His "sooty highness" may have reason to be offended, for being compared with this writer in the Belfast Magazine.

I hope A. Z. will allow me to advise him never again to make such an unhandsome attack on the Female-sex, as it only serves to expose his ill-nature, and I trust there will always be some person found who will defend them from his attacks. Should the times ever change so much, as to oblige the ladies to be sold, I am sure they can have no objection to employ A. Z. as an auctioneer, he is so dexterous at that trade, and he may perhaps expedite their sale by some of his coarse jests, which I suppose auctioneers are permitted to use; but his writings are not calculated either to instruct or to enlighten mankind.

I cannot imagine why A. Z. has formed such a poor opinion of the Female-sex, except that he has found them very ready to fall in love with him. This would not show their good taste, unless he is very different from what his writings lead me to suppose; or that he uses the Magazine as a kind of mask to express sentiments which he would not dare to utter in conversation in their presence.

A FEMALE QUIXOTTE.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

AN EXCURSION TO GRACE-HILL.

SIR,
ENCOURAGED, by reading a Ramble to Antrim, inserted in your Magazine, I am induced to of-